

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-18 and add new claims 19-34 in accordance with the following listing showing the status of all claims in the application.

1-18 (Canceled)

19. (New) A computer language for defining a Web-based conversation, comprising:

- (a) a plurality of defined document type descriptions, each document type description specifying a type of document that can be used;
- (b) a set of defined interactions, each interaction specifying any expected inbound document types and any resulting outbound document types;
- (c) a set of transformations for use in connection with the defined interactions, each transformation specifying how to convert one document type to another document type, together with instructions for applying said transformations to compensate for mismatches between documents actually received and expected inbound document types; and
- (d) a transition structure that maps all permissible flows for a given conversation by identifying interactions from the set of defined interactions and specifying transitions between the identified interactions,

wherein each of (a)-(d) is a separately defined component of said computer language.

20. (New) A computer language according to claim 19, wherein at least one of the specified interactions allows for any of a plurality of inbound document types, and wherein the transition structure specifies different transitions depending upon which document type is actually received.

21. (New) A computer language according to claim 19, wherein the plurality of defined document type descriptions comprise XML stylesheets.

22. (New) A computer language according to claim 19, wherein the defined document type descriptions, the defined interactions and the set of transformations are available for defining additional transition structures that specify interactions and transitions for other desired conversations.

23. (New) A computer language according to claim 19, further comprising a second transition structure, corresponding to a second conversation, that identifies a second group of interactions from the set of defined interactions and specifies transitions between the interactions in the second group.

24. (New) A computer language according to claim 23, wherein at least some of the interactions in the second group also specify any applicable transformations.

25. (New) A conversation controller for controlling a conversation between a Web service and an external entity, comprising:

(a) a communications interface for exchanging documents with a Web service and an external entity;

(b) a plurality of defined document type descriptions, each document type description specifying a type of document that can be used;

(c) a set of defined interactions, each interaction specifying any expected inbound document types and any resulting outbound document types;

(d) a transition structure that maps all permissible flows for a given conversation by identifying interactions from the set of defined interactions and specifying transitions between the identified interactions;

(e) a set of transformations, each transformation specifying how to convert one document type to another document type;

(f) a control processor for exchanging documents with the Web service and with the external entity through the communications interface in accordance with the transition structure; and

(g) a transformation component that maps document types using the set of transformations to compensate for mismatches between documents actually received from the external entity and expected inbound document types,

wherein each of (b)-(e) is a separately defined component of said conversation controller.

26. (New) A conversation controller according to claim 25, wherein at least some of the interactions also specify any applicable transformations.

27. (New) A conversation controller according to claim 25, wherein both the transition structure and a plurality of transition structures for other Web services are accessible through a central Web-based registry.

28. (New) A conversation controller according to claim 25, wherein the transition structure defines permissible conversation flows from the perspective of the Web service.

29. (New) A conversation controller according to claim 25, wherein at least one of the specified interactions allows for any of a plurality of inbound document types, and wherein the transition structure specifies different transitions depending upon which document type is actually received.

30. (New) A conversation controller according to claim 25, further comprising a second transition structure, corresponding to a second conversation, that identifies a second group of interactions from the set of defined interactions and specifies transitions between the interactions in the second group.

31. (New) A conversation controller according to claim 30, wherein at least some of the interactions in the second group also specify any applicable transformations.

32. (New) A conversation controller according to claim 25, wherein the plurality of defined document type descriptions comprise XML stylesheets.

33. (New) A conversation controller according to claim 25, wherein the defined document type descriptions, the defined interactions and the set of transformations are available for defining additional transition structures that specify interactions and transitions for other desired conversations.

34. (New) A conversation controller according to claim 25, wherein the control processor is located remotely from a processor executing the Web service.